

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING February 11, 2021

Committee Members Present

Gladys Cortez, Committee Chair
Kimberly Blackmon
Andrew Crim, Council Vice-Chair
Mary Durham, Council Chair
Ivy Goldstein, DSHS
Jennifer Hines, TWC
Scott McAvoy
Holly Riley, HHSC
Robert Schier III
Keith Swink, TEA
Toby Summers
John Thomas

Committee Members Absent

Maverick Crawford III
Molly Spratt

Council Members Present

Eric Shahid

Guests Present

Judy Blake
Kyle Cox
Alice Crawford
Joey Gidseg
Olga Guerra
Rebecca Japko
Laura Marquez
Caitlin Mende
Leah Seyoum-Tesfa

Regional Coordinators Present

Morgan Bradley
Rosa Guel
Skyler Mueller
Anthony Ross
Shelby Vaughn
Richard Williams

Staff Members Present

Beth Stalvey, Executive Director
Martha Cantu
Scott Daigle
Robert Garcia
Lauren Gerken
Sabrina Gonzalez
Stacey Kaleh
Genessee Klemm
Linda Logan
Evan Marczynski
Sylvia Medina
Richard Rendon
Mary Rochford
Fernando Rodriguez
Koren Vogel
Rosalin Willis

Call To Order

Pursuant to the Governor's March 16, 2020 suspension of certain provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, the Project Development Committee of the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities convened virtually using the Zoom platform on Thursday, February 11, 2020. Committee Chair Gladys Cortez called the meeting to order at 9:33 AM. A quorum was present.

1. Introductions

Committee members, staff and guests were introduced.

2. Public Comments

Judy Blake, Project Director for the Family to Family Leadership Development and Advocacy Training project, offered public comments on the accomplishments of that project.

3. Consideration of Minutes

The minutes were reviewed, and no corrections or additions were noted.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the October 29, 2020, Project Development Committee as presented.

MADE BY: Mary Durheim

SECOND: Robert Schier III

The motion **passed** unanimously.

4. Chair's Remarks

Chair Cortez reported the expected absence of Molly Spratt. She also reported that she will do a presentation on IDD and trauma-informed care for the Rio Grande Valley Chapter of the Texas Association of Play Therapy.

Cortez discussed the revisions to the TCDD financial reports which highlights funds available for grants by showing funds that are assigned, pending, or have not been assigned.

5. Members Quarterly Activities Report

Committee members shared their updates on their disability-related activities during the previous quarter.

6. Staff Reports

Grants Management Director Rosalin Willis reported January through March 2021 start dates for eight projects that were approved by the Council during the summer and fall meetings of 2020.

Willis also reported five mini-grant projects that ended during the quarter along with two projects that have entered the final year of funding. Four projects will be considered for continuation funding during the May 2021 meeting.

7. Culturally Appropriate Family Supports Presentation: Reaching Families Advocacy and Support Group

Leah Seyoum-Tesfa, Founder and President of Reaching Families Advocacy & Support Group, discussed the Culturally Appropriate Family Supports project which ended in January 2020. The project's goal was to increase awareness and provide support and access to resources for the Ethiopian, Eritrean and Kenyan communities residing in Dallas, Collin, Denton, and Tarrant counties. This was achieved through networking, collaboration, and relationship building. The project educated community leaders about available resources; encouraged early intervention; provided culturally sensitive resources; helped improve advocacy skills in the communities; and created tools to help families better coordinate services and assist with employment opportunities.

Seyoum-Tesfa expressed her gratitude to TCDD for funding the project and to the past and present grants management staff for their assistance and support during the execution of the project.

8. **Future Activities for State Plan Implementation**

The Committee discussed two new state plan project executive summaries and evaluated the priority of projects previously approved for funding.

Committee Chair Cortez first presented the executive summary for Understanding Online Access Among Individuals with DD During COVID-19. Addressing Goal 4, Objective 2 of the TCDD State Plan, this project will review and collect data to inform leaders on how individuals with developmental disabilities (DD) are accessing information and connecting in a virtual environment. This may include access to special education systems, higher education systems, home and community-based services and supports, and social engagement. The data would inform the system to respond with strategies that are consistent with the needs of individuals with DD and provide improved access to services and supports. The anticipated funding amount is up to \$100,000 for one up to 12-month project.

MOTION: Recommend Council approve funding of up to \$100,000 for one 12-month Understanding Online Access Among Individuals with DD During COVID19 project.

MADE BY: Andrew Crim

SECOND: Scott McAvoy

The motion **passed** unanimously.

Chair Cortez next presented the executive summary for Understanding Employment and Unemployment Among Individuals with DD During COVID-19. Also addressing Goal 4, Objective 2 of the TCDD State Plan, this project will review existing and/or collect new data on the impact of COVID-19 as it relates to the employment experiences of individuals with DD, employers, and service providers. It is expected that the data can 1) inform employers to provide supports that are consistent with preference and needs of employees with DD; 2) inform state systems and service providers on the job training and job support needs of individuals with DD during the pandemic; and 3) inform schools on ways to maintain employment training and supports for students. The anticipated funding amount is up to \$100,000 for one up to 12-month project.

MOTION: Recommend Council approve funding of up to \$100,000 for one 12-month Understanding Employment and Unemployment Among Individuals with DD During COVID19 project.

MADE BY: Scott McAvoy

SECOND: Robert Schier III

The motion **passed** with John Thomas opposed.

The Committee next evaluated the Future Funding Priorities List. Members were in agreement that the two projects recommended for Council approval should be prioritized at the top of the list due to the timeliness of the content. After discussion of the other projects on the list, members agreed that the original intent of several projects has changed due to timing, pandemic, and other reasons and recommended the removal of the Journalism

Fellows project and re-assessment of the Disability Advocacy Conference project and the Engagement with Millennials project.

MOTION: Recommend Council approve the Future Funding Priorities List as follows:

- 1) [new] Understanding Online Access Among individuals with DD During COVID19
- 2) [new] Understanding of Employment and Unemployment Among individuals with DD During COVID19
- 3) Prevention and Response to Sexual Offenses: Medical and Therapeutic Professionals
- 4) Prevention and Response to Sexual Offenses: Criminal Justice Response to Cases involving people with IDD
- 5) Higher Education
- 6) Higher Education Collaborative
- 7) Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery (First Responders)
- 8) Disability Related Participatory Research

MADE BY: Scott McAvoy

SECOND: Robert Schier III

The motion **passed** unanimously.

9. **Future Agenda Items**

The Committee directed staff to bring new executive summaries for Disability Advocacy Conference for TCDD Leadership and Advocacy Trainees, Civic Engagement, and a new version of the Culturally Appropriate Family Supports project.

10. **Other Discussion Items**

The Committee was informed that plans are for the May 2021 and August 2021 meetings to be held virtually.

Adjourn

Chair Cortez adjourned the meeting at 12:15 PM.

Beth Stalvey, Secretary to the Council Date